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P 222021Z MAR 79  
FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9937

[REDACTED] BUENOS AIRES 2277

E.O. 12065: GDS 3/22/85 (HALLMAN, WILLIAM H.) OR-P  
TAGS: SHUM AR  
SUBJ: MFA PROBE ON U.S. RESPONSE TO TIMERMAN RELEASE

1. [REDACTED] - ENTIRE TEXT).

2. FOLLOWING UP AN INFORMAL APPROACH MADE AT SOCIAL  
OCCASION 3-20 NORTH AMERICAN AFFAIRS DIRECTOR AT  
FOREIGN AFFAIRS MINISTRY (ESPECHE GIL) ASKED POLOFF  
TODAY 3-22 TO COME TO MINISTRY AS SOON AS POSSIBLE TO  
DISCUSS THE JACOBO TIMERMAN CASE.

3. ESPECHE GIL RAISED THIS QUESTION: WHAT WOULD BE  
THE ATTITUDE OF THE UNITED STATES TO TIMERMAN'S RELEASE --  
AND, MORE SPECIFICALLY, HOW WOULD ELEMENTS OF THE U.S.G.  
RESPOND TO THIS EVENT? PRESS ATTITUDES ARE IMPORTANT,  
ESPECHE GIL SAID, BUT HE NEEDS TO KNOW MORE ABOUT WHAT  
MIGHT HAPPEN IN THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, OTHER OFFICES  
OF THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH OF GOVERNMENT AND IN THE CONGRESS  
AS RESPONSE TO TIMERMAN'S RELEASE.

4. EMBOFF REPLIED THAT TIMERMAN'S RELEASE WOULD  
REMOVE AN IRRITANT AND CREATE OPTIMISM ABOUT THE  
ARGENTINE GOVERNMENT'S INTENTIONS BUT THAT IT ALSO  
MIGHT PASS AS A STEP THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD HAVE  
TAKEN MONTHS AGO AS AN ACT OF ELEMENTAL FAIRNESS.

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EMBOFF SAID ALSO THAT TERMS OF HIS RELEASE WOULD BE  
IMPORTANT, WITH COMPLETE FREEDOM TO COME AND GO AS

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ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)  
U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS  
Margaret P. Griefeld, Director  
☒ Release ☐ Excise ☐ Deny  
Exemption(s):  
Declassify: ☐ In Part ☒ In Full  
☐ Classify as ☐ Extend as ☐ Downgrade to  
Date Declassify on Reason

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HE PLEASES -- TO TRAVEL ABROAD AS WOULD ANY ARGENTINE CITIZEN -- BEING THE ONLY COURSE THAT WOULD GET ANY ACCOLADES. TIMERMAN'S EXPULSION -- ANOTHER COURSE WHICH ESPECHE GIL ADMITTED WAS POSSIBLE -- WOULD BE CONSIDERED AN UNSATISFACTORY ADJUSTMENT OF A LARGE INJUSTICE.

5. ESPECHE GIL ASKED SPECIFICALLY ABOUT EFFECTS OF TIMERMAN'S ACCEPTING COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY INVITATION (STATE 054956 AND BUENOS AIRES 1984). EMBOFF SAID TIMERMAN'S ACCEPTANCE AND TRAVEL TO NEW YORK WOULD FOR SURE GIVE EVIDENCE OF HIS UNCONDITIONAL LIBERTY -- ASSUMING OF COURSE HE WAS ABLE TO RETURN TO ARGENTINA SHOULD HE CHOOSE. CONVERSATION THEN WENT ALONG LINES OF WHAT TIMERMAN HIMSELF MIGHT WANT OR DO UPON HIS RELEASE -- ABOUT WHICH IT WAS USELESS TO SPECULATE. ONLY TIMERMAN HIMSELF COULD ANSWER QUESTIONS ABOUT ACTIVITIES HE WOULD PROPOSE, PRESUMABLY ONLY AFTER THE TERMS OF HIS RELEASE HAD BEEN DISCUSSED IN DETAIL WITH GOA AUTHORITIES.

6. CONVERSATION ENDED WITH AGREEMENT TO MEET AGAIN ONCE EMBASSY HAD CLEARER PICTURE OF "THE U.S. RESPONSE."

7. COMMENT. FROM SEVERAL SOURCES WE HEARD THAT TIMERMAN'S RELEASE IS BEING SERIOUSLY DISCUSSED WITHIN GOA. TIMERMAN'S BROTHER HERE HAS TOLD US HE IS ENCOURAGED REGARDING POSSIBILITIES OF JACOBO'S RELEASE. FOREIGN MINISTER PASTOR IS REPORTED TO HAVE BEEN ASKED ABOUT TIMERMAN DURING HIS VISITS TO VENEZUELA AND BRAZIL, AND IN ANY EVENT IT IS THE FOREIGN MINISTRY THAT FEELS THE BLAST

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OF OPINION OUTSIDE ARGENTINA -- ALL INSISTENT TIMERMAN BE FREED. FOREIGN MINISTRY APPEARS TO BE FISHING FOR ARGUMENTS TO FAVOR TIMERMAN'S RELEASE, AMONG WHICH SOME NOTABLE (PREFERABLE EVEN TANGIBLE) U.S. ACT OF PRAISE WOULD WEIGH HEAVILY.

8. ACTION REQUESTED. WE RECOMMEND NO "PRICE" BE OFFERED FOR TIMERMAN'S RELEASE, BUT -- ASSUMING HIS RELEASE IS UNCONDITIONAL -- IT SEEMS APPROPRIATE TO US THAT THE DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN NOTE THE RELEASE AS "ENCOURAGING" AND "CREATING OPTIMISM ABOUT THE ARGENTINE GOVERNMENT'S INTENTIONS TOWARD HUMAN RIGHTS

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VIOLATIONS WHICH HAVE TAKEN PLACE IN THAT COUNTRY."  
DEPARTMENT'S VIEWS REQUESTED.

9. SEPTTEL RESPONDS TO STATE 69331 CONCERNING  
POSSIBILITY OF A TIMERMAN HUNGER STRIKE.  
CASTRO

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